

RICHARD DEVLIN

State Senator

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OREGON STATE SENATE

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As you likely know, HB 3618, passed by the Oregon legislature in the 2010 session, gives those who provide personal support services the right to form a union and collectively bargain with the state. Per this law, lists of those eligible to form a collective bargaining unit have been made available at the request of SEIU Local 503. Some of these individuals covered by HB 3618 work through brokerages such as yours.

You may have questions from personal support service workers or others affected by this new law. It is important to keep in mind that those who will choose whether to form a union should be able to do so in an atmosphere free from coercion or retribution. As a brokerage, you play a vital role in support service delivery and are the trusted recipient of public funds to carry out this mission of inclusion for all Oregonians. I believe that it is a misuse of public funds to participate in efforts meant to dissuade support service workers from exercising their collective bargaining rights. Even mildly worded communications against collective bargaining will carry disproportionate weight because of your role in providing services. At a time when our budget is in crisis, our resources should be solely focused on providing the support that individuals need to thrive in our communities. Our resources should not be used on trying to thwart personal support service work efforts to form a union.

As the Senate Co-Chair of the Ways and Means Committee, which sets the DHS budget, I am committed to working with Oregonians with developmental disabilities, families, support service workers and you. If support service workers choose to form a union, I believe they will be able to significantly strengthen our collective ability to preserve funding and enhance services. Our shared vision of a society of inclusion is under threat with the budget shortfall we are facing. We will have to work together to fulfill the promise of Staley: Oregonians with developmental disabilities have a human right to independence and inclusion.

Thank you for the valuable work that you do delivering quality services.

Sincerely,

Senator Richard Devlin

